

Name _____

Nature's Bounty in Japan: A Look at its Diverse Animal and Plant Life

Short Answer Key

1. "Sakura season" is highly significant in Japanese culture as it marks the blooming of cherry blossoms, specifically sakura trees. People celebrate this season with hanami (flower viewing) picnics beneath the cherry blossoms. It's a time of joy, reflection, and a sense of renewal as spring arrives.
2. Bamboo plays a versatile role in Japanese daily life and culture. It symbolizes resilience and adaptability due to its ability to thrive in various conditions. Bamboo is used in construction for scaffolding and as a building material. It is also crafted into tools, utensils, furniture, and musical instruments. Additionally, bamboo shoots are a popular ingredient in Japanese cuisine.
3. The Japanese giant salamander is one of the world's largest amphibians. It is typically found in clear, fast-flowing rivers and streams in Japan. These salamanders have a unique appearance with wrinkled skin and frilly gills, adapted for their aquatic habitat.
4. In Japanese folklore, the tanuki (Japanese raccoon dog) is often portrayed as a mischievous and shape-shifting creature. It is known for its playful and sometimes trickster nature. Tanuki are also associated with the ability to transform leaves into money and are often depicted wearing a straw hat and carrying a sake bottle.
5. The red-crowned crane is revered in Japanese culture for symbolizing longevity and fidelity. It is known for its striking appearance, with a white body and a red crown on its head. The crane is also famous for its intricate courtship dances, which are seen as a display of dedication and commitment.

